

# PRESS RELEASE

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## For Immediate Release

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## **FEDERAL GRAND JURY RETURNS INDICTMENT**

Madison, Wisconsin -- A federal grand jury in the Western District of Wisconsin, sitting in Madison, returned the following indictment today. You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

### **MINNESOTA MAN CHARGED WITH COUNTERFEITING CHECKS**

Stephen J. Barthold, 43, of Forest Lake, Minnesota, is charged in a superseding indictment with conspiracy to transport in interstate commerce falsely made, forged, altered, and counterfeited securities. The indictment alleges that this conspiracy took place during the period from August 17, 2005 to September 27, 2005. He is also charged with possession of counterfeit checks, possession of a means of identification of another individual with intent to use it to commit a crime, possession of implements for making counterfeit checks, and possession of a stolen motor vehicle transported across state lines. Barthold had been indicted by the grand jury on March 29, 2007, on four counts of making and possessing a forged security and possession of a means of identification of another individual with intent to use it to commit a crime.

The indictment alleges that as part of the conspiracy, Barthold obtained checks stolen from the mail; that he traveled from Minnesota to Wisconsin to pass bad checks; that he used account information from some of the stolen checks to create falsely-made and counterfeit checks; that he created false identification documents in the names of the drawers of the checks to facilitate his negotiation of the checks; and that he used the stolen checks and counterfeit checks to purchase goods and services from merchants. The indictment further alleges that Barthold used forged checks at businesses in Abbotsford, Wausau, and St. Croix Falls, and used stolen checks to make and print counterfeit checks while staying at a motel in Balsam Lake.

If convicted on all counts, Barthold faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in federal prison, subject to the application of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. The charges against him are the result of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Polk County Sheriff's Department, and the St. Croix Falls Police Department. The prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson.

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